

Name (Darrall, Thompson)

Staff Reference: – 244

FTE: 1.0

FOR: 1299, 1902

Level: C

Status: Employed

Function: Teaching and Research

ABC Web/Radio Play: Checklist for an armed robber

This project investigated cross-media (Internet and radio) drama. It focused on (i) the potential of audio (including spatialised) in conjunction with visual interfaces to enhance engagement with drama experiences and (ii) innovative and engaging forms of audience participation/feedback. The aim was to investigate more effective and engaging dimensions in cross-media drama, in order to inform its future development. The interactive website is permanently hosted as part of the ABC's site together with the linked two-part radio play that was originally broadcast Part one, 11 April 2004 and Part two 18 April 2004.

The radio play contrasted and overlaid two events that happened on the same weekend in October 2002. Namely, the Moscow theatre siege by the Chechen rebels and the robbing of a bookstore in Newcastle New South Wales. The interactive website and interface design explored the themes within the radio play and used spacial - audio extracts to allow users to blend and play with visual-audio elements. Themes in the web interface included: the issue of negotiation contrasting the success of the Russian Government with that of the bookshop owner in Newcastle; the subtle relationship that guns and weapons have with those who use them to further their aims; the way in which media intervenes directly and indirectly in the outcome of such events.

The live broadcasting of the play was separated into two parts in order to engage the audience in the website after part one and prior to part two.

The audience were then surveyed to analyse the effects of the interaction on engagement with the play.

Background

Associate Professor Norie Neumark (Audio Artist) and Senior Lecturer Darrall Thompson (Web Designer) were the concept collaborators on this project. The collaborative team also included the author of the radio play (the young winner of an ABC author's award), the Head of New Media at the ABC, a Radio National producer and a spatial audio expert.

Contribution

The project contributed technically to the use of spatial audio in a web environment and the linking of this with visual effects and navigation elements. It also contributed to the collaboration between departments within the ABC as the first joint-department project to be funded internally.

Significance

The outcomes made a significant contribution to knowledge about effective audience feedback/participation and specifically to how emergent areas of audio can engage Internet users. The project continues to stimulate debate in the broader Internet and radio industries with regard to their cross-media potential in digital culture.